



# The GRANGE

Issue: 92

JULY

2003

## CHAIR'S REPORT

On April 28th, 2003 The Grange celebrated its 30th Anniversary of being open to the public. It was wonderful to see so many of the people who were instrumental in making the idea of the Womens' Committee a reality. From Peter Stokes (restoration architect and our guest speaker for the evening) and Margaret Machell (aka *Keeper of The Grange*) to former AGO Director Wm. Withrow and Mary Alice Stuart. Mrs Stuart was chiefly responsible for obtaining the funds for the restoration. The food was delicious (thanks to our Modern Kitchen Committee) and a pleasant time was had by all.

I have read the reminiscence of Grange Staffers from 1973-1980. I found out about Shelly the Squirrel and the séances in the Breakfast Parlour. We still have Shelly's descendants knocking at the Bakeroom window but there will be no more séances held in the Breakfast Parlour!

This summer we will see the return of the Teens Behind the Scene high school students. We hope that even though this is something that is required as part of their curriculum it can be an enjoyable experience. Jack Carr will be continuing in his alter ego of Mr. Chin. For those of you who have not seen his performance I urge you to do so. It is brilliant and you quite forget that it is 2003 and not 1910.

May 5th took Grangers to Peterborough for our annual Bus Trip. This year we visited the Canoe Museum, had lunch at Hutchinson House and perused the Lang Pioneer Village Museum. A new twist this time, we paired with members of The Ontario Historical Society. Thanks to Helvi Hunter, our Continuing Education Chair, this worked extremely well and there is talk of doing future excursions together.

As Chair, my goal is to further enhance the profile of The Grange (and consequently the AGO) in the city, the province, the country and ....the world. I believe in sharing ideas, concerns and information. Thanks to the Internet this is a possibility.

Finally I would like to thank my predecessor, Avril Stringer. We have been sharing (and continue to share) an office for over a year and I keep my eyes and ears open and learn a lot.

Enjoy the summer, until the fall, Cathy Stroud, Chair, The Grange

## Farewell Grangers:

Actually that's a misnomer, I'm not really going anywhere, but my time as Chair of Grange Volunteers is over. It's been an interesting and busy three years, trying to keep you all in line. Seriously I have greatly appreciated all the support and help I have received. It has also been an eventful three years. In November 2000 we had a visit from Governor General, Adrienne Clarkson who came to carry on the tradition started by Goldwin Smith, whereby each Governor General drinks a toast to the Monarch from our famous Simcoe glass. In December of that year Madame Putin, wife of the President of Russia paid us a brief visit. September 2001 saw the start of the highly successful, *Houseguests, Contemporary Artists in The Grange*.

2002 was somewhat less eventful, but a good year nevertheless. This year we have William Chin, The Grange butler brought back to life by Jack Carr, a Galley Docent and talented actor. As I said I'm not going anywhere, I'll still be doing research, treasury and interpreting. Again, thank you all for your support,

*au revoir.*

- Avril Stringer

## WHAT'S INSIDE

Spotlight on the Newsletter	pg 2
Upcoming dates for Volunteers	pg 2
The Grange Volunteer Executive	pg 2
Curatorial Corner	pg 3
Photos - 30th Anniversary	pg 3
Potash, Pearlash & Soapmaking	pg 4

**ANNUAL GATHERING  
of the  
AGO VOLUNTEERS**

Date: Tuesday, September 16, 2003

Time: 5:30 pm

Place: Walker Court  
*Watch for details*

**THE GRANGE  
VOLUNTEER SUPPERS**

Monday, SEPTEMBER 15, 2003

Monday, OCTOBER 20, 2003

Monday, NOVEMBER 10, 2003

***Spotlight:  
The Grange Newsletter***

The Grange Newsletter is 22 years old and was launched in November 1981. At the time, it was a monthly publication, was about 1&1/2 pages long and the fanlight was the logo. Newsletter editors included names such as Marilyn Litvak and Connie Masters.

Seven years ago, the Grange Newsletter, as it now looks, was the project of Wednesday evening volunteer, Elaine Maloney and then Chair, Flo Morsen. Together, they discussed the way the newsletter would look and the various topics that it would feature.

Since that time, Elaine and the Chair-persons (Flo Morsen, Mona Rankin, Avril Stringer and now Cathy Stroud) along with our Site Co-ordinator, Jenny Reiger, have brought to the readers the Chair's Report, The Grange Volunteer Coming Events, Staffing News, Book Reviews, Research Articles of Interest from the Research Committee, Volunteer Spotlights and other items of interest that the Grange Volunteers contribute. When Jenny Rieger joined The Grange, the Curatorial Corner was added. Jenny continues to keep the Grange Volunteers and our other readers abreast of the ongoing projects and research endeavours that she is involved in on behalf of The Grange and the Gallery.

The newsletter has evolved over the past 22 years as we try to enlighten and inform our volunteers and readers. We continue to welcome contributions and suggestions. Please share your news by contacting Cathy Stroud, Jenny Rieger or Elaine Maloney.

*Why does the newsletter look the way it does?*

The Grange Newsletter reminds its readers of a traditional style newspaper. Since we reflect The Grange, an historic house, the view towards a rather conservative newsletter was thought to be the way to go. The colour of our newsletter has been kept as an off-white-beige colour to enhance that "historic" feel. The font is consistently the "Times" font and is also reflective of yesterday's print.

The Grange on the face of our newsletter is the perfect icon for our publication. It is the visual flag that not only represents us and where we volunteer but also presents the Georgian style house that was the first home of the Art Gallery of Ontario.

The Grange Newsletter is usually 4 pages. A four-page newsletter is the perfect size for our volunteers to update themselves on the events and research of the house. Sometimes, an insert is added to the newsletter to focus on a specific topic. For example: the topic on "Making a Spill" was done as an insert so that it could also serve as a teaching / training tool for new volunteers.

*How often is the newsletter published and who reads it?*

The Grange Newsletter is published quarterly in the Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. It is distributed to 100 Grange volunteers, the Chair-persons of the other Volunteer Departments within the Gallery, 20 AGO Staff members, the Agora Restaurant, the 8 members of The Grange Council, 21 inactive Grange volunteers and to 21 other historic sites in the Toronto area.

**The Grange  
Volunteer Executive  
2003-2004**

**CHAIR**

Catherine Stroud  
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**SECRETARY**

Jane Ash

**TREASURER/RESEARCH**

Avril Stringer

**COMMITTEES**

**CONTINUING EDUCATION**

Helvi Hunter

**HOUSE COMMITTEE**

Jane Heinemann

**HISTORIC KITCHENS**

Pauline Lee

**MODERN KITCHEN**

Helen Hatton

**DAY CAPTAINS**

Monday: Jane Heinemann

Tuesday: Elvira Putrus

Wednesday: Mary Lou Zingrone

Wednesday Bridge: Helvi Hunter

Wednesday Eve: Marg McGuigan

Thursday: June O'Brien

Friday: Beverley Sutton

Saturday: Linda Ness / Richard Seto

Sunday: Edna Rigby

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**REMINDER**

Please submit news articles & letters to the editor for the next Grange newsletter by **FRIDAY, SEPT 5, 2003.**

## CURATORIAL CORNER

BY JENNY RIEGER

As all of you are aware, there are many special events held in the sculpture atrium. A recent event had very close Grange connections. The Hanson Brick Co. held a reception a few weeks ago and asked that The Grange be open during the event. I brought out a number of original bricks and brick pieces (kept under the counter in the scullery) for the guests to look at. People found both the bricks and the house very interesting and commented on how much they enjoyed the opportunity.

Some of you may know that Peter Stokes, our restoration architect, speculated that the bricks for building The Grange were made on the property. I asked the owner of the company if this was possible. He told me that it was quite common that a brick kiln would be set up and bricks would be formed and fired with clay from the property. Once fired they could be used. I have since enquired further and learned that the bricks for The Gibson House in Willowdale were made on that property as well. While we have no direct evidence (receipts, or account book entries)

I think we can safely say that our bricks were likely made on the property.

I thought we had a wonderful Annual General Meeting of Grange Volunteers last month. It was a wonderful way to celebrate our 30th anniversary of the restoration and great to have such a good turnout. As always, Peter Stokes' talk was interesting and amusing. It was also nice to see so many people come who had been involved in the past history of the house. I think we would all agree that the food was delicious.

Last month we also celebrated National Volunteer Week. The Grange is lucky to have so many dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers and I feel privileged to work with all of you. On behalf of the AGO, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your passion, skill and dedication. And, I hope you all have a healthy and happy summer.

### Photographs: The Grange 30th Anniversary / Annual General Meeting, April 2003



Left to right: Peter Stokes (guest speaker), Denis Reid, Avril Stringer, Jane Aitken, Kae Fogden, Margaret Machell, Sandra Matthew, Bill Withrow, Elizabeth Chishe-Graham, Susie Stohn & Mary Alice Stuart



Left to right: Bev Sutton, Georgette Caldwell and Mary Cormack



Left to right: Jane Ash, Nancy Lofft, Lucienne Watt, Sandra Matthews and Jane Heinemann

## POTASH, PEARLASH AND SOAP MAKING *part II*

As mentioned in the previous Newsletter (March / April 2003) the immediate necessity was the clearing of the land in order to create land for farms to support the pioneers, and burning the cleared logs was the best way of getting rid of them. The resulting ashes were then sold. The best ashes however, were saved "for they were extensively used in the manufacture of soap and fertilizers at that time."

The best ashes for making soap were those of hardwood trees. The other main ingredient was grease. Most pioneer homes had consequently a soap-box where all sorts of fat rinds, dripping, grease, etc., were stored in readiness for soap-making. The entrails of animals were used and even the bones were boiled down in strong lye; the lime content improving the soap. Enough soap was made to last a year, and it was thought best to choose a time when the moon was new, for the soap tended to dry out too much as the moon waned.

An ash-leach would have been made; comprised of a barrel or vat set on a drainage platform. The platform would be raised so that a tub could be placed underneath to catch the lye. The leach barrel was prepared with a layer of straw and possibly a layer of lime. This last was to neutralize certain salts, which would spoil the soap. Then ashes were added and water, first hot then cold, was poured through. "As the water soaked through it dissolved the alkali in the ashes and the lye ran out into the receptacle beneath."

Edwin Guillet quotes a letter from the Reverend L.F. Kipp of Montreal, relating memories of his childhood around 1880.

One of my boyhood memories was the annual making of soft soap, and the appearance two or three times per year of the ashman. Our wood ashes were put into a little shed near the orchard fence.

As far as soft soap was concerned, it was quite an operation. On a platform grooved to run the lye down to a great iron kettle was a 4 foot log hollowed out to the platform. This was filled with ashes, and pails of water poured into the top. In a few days a deep-red liquid came out. When mother had sufficient, a fire was set under the big iron kettle into which went all the bones and fat saved in the winter. When the lye had eaten as many bones and fat as it could \* you had a soap like liver. Believe me, it would take off any dirt misplaced – and the skin on your hands as well.

\* *When as much fat as the lye could absorb was absorbed a thick scum of grease would form on top of the lye.*

The resulting soft soap would have stood by the family wash basin and scooped out in handfuls when needed. Many older settlers clung to this home method of making soap. However, the younger generations preferred the "new-fangled" stuff. In other words, they purchased ready made soap. This would have been the case at The Grange. And, while we can talk about soap making it was not. An activity that would have been practiced at The Grange.

### A GRANGE CONNECTION

As mentioned soap used in The Grange was purchased. The Proudfoot ledger shows.

On August 19, 1828 D'Arcy Jr purchased "2 pieces" of soap from William Proudfoot at a price of 2/-

On October 30, 1828 of the same year for 1/6\_

On November 11, 1828 - 60 soaps @7 pence each.

On August 24th 1829, another 60 seven penny soaps were purchased

Inflation was a factor in those day too: by 1830 the price had gone up to 7\_d. These 7\_d soaps were a regular purchase for the D'Arcy Boulton family.

Judging from the quantity bought by the Boultons of this fairly cheap soap, we can assume that it was used throughout the house for many purposes. I would have expected to find purchases of more exotic soaps for family ablutions. However, this could have been purchased from another source.